



## **IFES Quarterly Report: January 1, 2005 – March 31, 2005**

### **Guinea: Strengthening Civic Dialogue**

**USAID Associate Cooperative Award No. 675-A-00-04-00026-00 under**

**USAID Cooperative Agreement No. DGC A-00-04-00026-00**

**Project Period: November 15, 2003 – March 1, 2006**

**Total Budget: \$1,940,000 Expenses Recorded to Date: \$ 873,968**

### **RESULTS SUMMARY**

- Professional organizations capacity building: Organized a training in advocacy and network development targeting 10 professional CSOs; provided support to their restitution tour throughout the administrative regions of Guinea and supported the assembly establishing their newly founded Union
- Media professionals: Organized a training in advocacy and network development; supported a meeting with journalists working in local languages to assist their endeavor to federate; organized a workshop in advocacy and network development
- Supported the National Week on Good Citizenship through the organization of workshops and training sessions throughout the country
- Prepared pedagogical material and conducted training of animators for the upcoming civic education campaigns

### **POLITICAL BACKGROUND**

On January 5, the newly appointed Prime Minister, Cellou Dallein Diallo, invited all the political parties to participate in a dialogue process to discuss Guinea's future. The radical opposition parties accepted the invitation, marking the occasion as the first time in nearly two years that the entire political class sat together around the table. The following day, however, Antoine Soromou, leader of the National Alliance for Development (a small opposition party), was arrested by Security Minister Moussa Sampil. All parties were convened on the following day to resume the dialogue process, but the FRAD parties (radical opposition) were absent.

On January 19, there was an attempt to assassinate President Lansana Conté as he was riding into town in the presidential convoy. It is unclear to date who orchestrated the shooting and some suspect that the incident was a ploy on the part of the President's entourage to justify repressive tactics. Indeed, the investigation provided the pretext for a massive witch hunt in which the country witnessed arbitrary arrests, road blocks, and other human rights exactions. The government also staged "forced" support campaigns and demonstrations on the part of various sectors of Guinean society (religious leaders, civil service, government members, youth groups, women's groups, etc.) which was yet another occasion for continuous pro-president and government propaganda on state controlled radio and television.

On February 19, M. Paul Yomba Kourouma, the lawyer of the opposition leader Antoine Soromou and M. Benn Pepito, head of the famous private newspaper *La Lance* were arrested in relation to the attempted assassination of the President. The morning following the arrest, an unprecedented outburst of solidarity was manifested by the Bar Association and other CSOs asking for the immediate liberation of the two prisoners. The fact that the Ordre National des Médecins (medical doctor's association), the National Order of Notaries and even the Veterinarians Association manifested their sympathy and concern has observers praising the work of IFES in developing networking and advocacy techniques amongst CSOs. Protest actions included the presence of most members of the Bar Association at the police station, requesting to be arrested as well. Another sign of change is that the Prime Minister not only accepted to meet with an important delegation of media professionals protesting against the arbitrary arrest of their colleague but this meeting was also broadcast on national television and radio the same evening.

Despite these setbacks, the end of February brought a glimpse of reform and an overall optimism on in regards to the new Prime Minister and some of his colleagues who seem determined to try to put Guinea back on track. Based on a report by the Inter-ministerial Committee which includes the Ministers of Security, Information, Foreign Affairs, Finance and Territorial Administration, it was announced that the liberalization of the airwaves is imminent (it should be noted that the report was based on a background paper prepared by an IFES initiated taskforce established following the national conference on Media in May 2004). State controlled media have also covered some activities of opposition leaders and the head of 2 opposition parties appeared as guests on a newly created television program targeting political personalities. Three unpopular ministers were dismissed in March, including Moussa Sampil, Minister of Security. He was responsible for many of the arbitrary arrests and other criticized initiatives. The Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MATD) Kiridi Bangoura met with donors and political parties (opposition included) to discuss the upcoming election of communal leaders and the topic of decentralization. In compliance with opposition parties' demands, the Minister ordered state officials throughout the country to allow political party leaders and militants to circulate freely and hold meetings.

In March, the Inter-ministerial Committee presented an optimistic update to an important delegation of the EU, addressing the main conditions that have been paralyzing European aid: the liberalization of the media, political dialogue and anti-corruption policies. In the light of this report, the EU committed to provide financial support to the electoral process as early as July, if reforms progress. The MATD is still pushing for June elections but the international community seems to agree that the schedule would be tight. The MATD Minister has said that he wants to organize these elections with the full participation of all the main political parties and that the entire process, voter registration, vote count, result compilation, etc. would be done in a transparent fashion. It seems unlikely that local elections will take place before the rainy season (July-October).

However, many observers, including the 3 most important opposition parties doubt that these measures and engagements will go very far, because of the ill will on the part of some of the President's influential entourage. The improved political climate brought the main opposition parties back to the negotiation table in early March, but for one session only. Prerequisites conditioning the participation of opposition parties in the dialogue process have still not been addressed and several issues pertaining to the organization of the upcoming local elections have yet to be discussed by political parties and the government. These include the

establishment of an independent electoral commission; the revision of the electoral list; the use of a single ballot and transparent urns; the revision of Article 88,89,90 introduced in the 2001 constitutional referendum which affects the core of the decentralization process at the local level and the pertinence of the upcoming local election.

## **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

### *Professional CSO Capacity Building*

IFES continued its capacity building program targeting professional organizations. These include the Bar Association, the National Order of Notaries, Chartered accountants, the National Order of Medical Doctors, the National Order of Pharmacists, the Order of Architects, the National Order of Veterinarians, the Order of Engineers, the Union of Bankers and Insurers and the Arbitration Board. The Association of Surveyors joined the group in mid March.

### Professional CSO Restitution Tour

From January 6-10, IFES organized a workshop in Conakry on advocacy and network development targeting 28 representatives of its partner professional CSOs. On the first day, participants were asked to identify an advocacy theme which they will focus on collectively. Working in groups, drawing from their individual and collective strategic plans, participants chose to advocate collectively for the application of legal texts pertaining to their respective professions in order to eradicate illegal practices in view of defending the interests of the population. Each organization also identified advocacy themes specifically related to their organization and developed individual advocacy action plans. International consultant Dorothee N'Golo was hired to facilitate the four-day workshop during which participants were able to familiarize themselves with advocacy tools and techniques and the advantages and challenges of working collectively and developing networks. In a lively and participatory fashion, the trainer brought participants to define the meaning of advocacy, presented the different components of an advocacy campaign, various methods including lobbies, communication and alliances. CSO participants came out of the workshop equipped for action and further convinced of the need to unite in order to be more effective.

Representatives of the professional CSOs met on January 19 at the IFES office to prepare the calendar and themes/content for their "restitution" tour which took place from February 7-28, in all seven regions. IFES field staff and two 3-member committees appointed by the 10 professional CSOs facilitated the three-week tour. The logistic organization of the meetings was entrusted to the regional CSO councils. The objective of this tour was to inform professional CSO members outside the capital of Conakry of the results and recommendations emanating of the various workshops initiated by IFES between September 2004 and January 2005. Approximately 40 participants, mostly members of professional organizations with some representatives of the administration, political parties and other CSOs attended each regional meeting. Participants were able to bring a regional perspective to the organizational diagnostics and strategic analysis developed by their Conakry counterparts. They reviewed and amended and/or enriched the strategic plan of action of their respective organization as well as the collective action plan. In response to the proposed establishment of a national federation of professional CSOs, participants in each region decided to establish a regional chapter of the national structure.

On March 11-12, an Assembly establishing formally the Union of Orders and Socioprofessional Organisations of Guinea (*Union Nationale des Ordres et Organisations Socio Professionnelles de Guinée –UNOOPS*)) took place in Conakry, under the patronage of the President of the Social and Economic Council of Guinea and the President of the National Council of Civil Society Organizations. Over 50 members representing 11 national professional organizations participated in the assembly, including 14 regional delegates. The group adopted their statutes and regulations, a three-year plan of action, and elected their board members. IFES will continue to support advocacy initiatives contained in the collective and individual plans of action of the newly founded UNOOPS and its member organizations.

### Media Professionals

Following recommendations of the roundtables on media and development initiated by IFES in 2004, a 3-day workshop was organized in Mamou, January 15-17 on advocacy techniques and network development, targeting representatives of the major media professional organizations operating in Guinea. 35 media professionals representing 7 national and regional associations including traditional communicators participated in the training session. IFES hired international consultant Dorothee N'Golo to facilitate the workshop that aimed to familiarize participants with the advantages and challenges of working within a network and techniques to help them advocate collectively. Participants identified two main issues they wish to address collectively: the right to inform freely and the right for the population to have access to quality information. Participants decided to create a network of media professionals and identified themes that will be the object of their upcoming advocacy action plan. These include improved access by the population to information; the revision of legal texts relative to freedom of the press and the mandate of the National Council of Communication; the liberalization of the airwaves and the improvement of the quality of information.

As part of its support to collective advocacy initiatives, IFES hosted a meeting organized by radio journalists working in local languages in Dalaba, in the region of Labé, on March 15-16, during which they created the Association of National Language Journalists (*Association des journalistes de langues nationales - AJLANG*). This decision was taken during a workshop organized by IFES last December, targeting this group of media professionals. The mandate of their newly created association is to promote professional collaboration, advocate collectively for better conditions on the work front and improved access by the population to quality information. Twenty participants represented the 4 rural radios and 5 community radios of Guinea plus the main national broadcasting structure in Conakry. The new association adopted its statutes and regulations and appointed an administrative board.

IFES will continue to support AJLANG by financing certain advocacy activities contained in their 3-year plan of action, that promote the right to plural and quality information and synergy between media and other civil society components.

### *National Week on Good Citizenship (March 21-27)*

IFES supported the government/civil society-led program by organizing 2 one-day workshops on citizens' rights and responsibilities in the capital, Conakry, targeting over 100 urban elected officials. In the regions, IFES sponsored 35 civic education animation sessions, deploying its animators trained for the upcoming civic education campaigns, touching more than 3500 citizens in the 7 regions of Guinea. IFES also provided T-shirts, caps and banners

to mark this event. The Minister of Pre-university and Civic Education highly commended IFES and USAID on national television and radio for their invaluable contribution.

In March IFES participated in the Kankan Agricultural Fair organized by ACA. A stand was rented where were displayed pedagogical materials, regular video presentations of a play on rights and responsibilities. Several training sessions were organized throughout the week by our local animators touching thousands. IFES received the prize of the most animated exhibit.

### *CSO Subgrant Program*

On January 4, IFES organized a one-day information meeting with representatives from the seven CSOs identified as potential partners to receive grants for the upcoming civic education campaigns. Represented at the meeting were the following organizations: the Free Union of Guinea Teachers and Researchers (SLECG); the Association for the Development of Community Initiatives (ADIC); the Guinean Volunteers for Development (UGVD); the African Training Center for Development (CENAFOD); the Guinean Volunteers for Economic and Cultural Development (OVODEC); the Association for the Defense of Women's Rights (ADDEF); and the Regional CSO Councils of N'Zérékoré and Kindia. IFES selected these organizations because of their previous experience in similar projects and the quality of their work and professionalism during previous IFES civic education campaigns in 2002-2003. All the necessary preparatory documents, proposals and budgets were prepared and sent to IFES in Washington to be approved. Each of the above listed CSO partners submitted their proposals and signed subgrant agreements with IFES in conjunction with the civic education campaign.

### *Civic Education Campaign*

A training of trainers/animators took place in Dalaba on March 16-19. A total of 70 participants attended, including 5 new animators per region and campaign regional coordinators and supervisors (bringing the total of trained animators to 160). It was an intensive course on rights, responsibilities, the electoral process and the technique of animating a training session in local languages using pictures. IFES hired a legal specialist, Maître Malick Diakité as a resource person and the 4-day workshop was facilitated by Elizabeth Côté, IFES country director. Themes such as the Nation, the Constitution, Democracy, the separation of powers, rights and responsibilities, the electoral process, were presented chronologically following the scenario of the actual animation session. Participants intermittently worked together in groups (divided by language) to practice presenting the themes in local languages. Plenary sessions gave them the opportunity to simulate their presentations and criticize their peers. Each participant received a *cahier du participant* which includes the theory and other key information for the animation sessions scheduled to take place in April.

Cheick Diakité, IFES staff member responsible for civic education campaign outreach to the handicapped and HIV-AIDS groups, trained six animators in preparation for the upcoming campaign. Those trained included one student and one teacher from the School for the Deaf, two from the Fédération Guinéenne des Personnes Handicapées, and two from the Association des Personnes Affectées et Infectées par le VIH SIDA, AGUIP+.

IFES also produced a series of pedagogical tools to support the civic education campaigns which were distributed to each of the regions the week of March 28. These included: 80,000 leaflets, 190 animator kits, 600 t-shirts and caps, banners, etc.

## **FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

- National Civic Education Campaign on Citizenship and campaign debriefing
- Training Workshop on private and public services targeting media professionals
- Roundtable on the access to legal documents
- Support of advocacy initiatives implemented by UNOPS, AJLANG and the future media professionals network
- Technical support for the regional social fora (Kindia, Kankan), initiated by the Guinean Council of Civil Society Organizations